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ABSTRACT

Evaluation findings of a teacher aide project implemented in grades 4 to 12 of a small rural school via the SEARCH (Selection of Educational Alternatives for Rural Change) program during the second semester of the 1969-70 school term are given. The project--carried out in the County of Lacombe in Alberta, Canada--made 2 aides available to all teachers on a first-come-first-serve basis. Due to such constraints as a short life-span of the project, a small number of observed teachers, and a possible lack of consistency in observers' recordings, conclusions are not put forward; however, trends are noted. Teachers appeared to have spent less time in school after aides were introduced; teachers varied in ability and willingness to make use of the aides' services; and teachers appeared to allocate less time to clerical tasks after the aides were introduced. Students perceived that teachers were better prepared after the aides were introduced and felt that the aides were more understanding of students than were teachers. Community members were generally supportive of the program but expressed a need for more school-to-home communication. This report is not intended to show correct or incorrect ways of utilizing aides but should be viewed as being feedback which will assist the teachers concerned in any modifications deemed desirable. Four tables are included. (AL)

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TEACHERS' AIDES: A PROJECT REPORT

Prepared by

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Project SEARCH

HUMAN RESOURCES RESEARCH COUNCIL
Edmonton, Alberta

August 1970

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I. INTRODUCTION

In September, 1969, the Alberta Human Resources Research Council, in cooperation with the County of Lacombe, undertook to develop ways and means of expanding the educational opportunities available to the youth attending small rural high schools. The vehicle designed to achieve this end is known as Project SEARCH (Selection of Educational Alternatives for Rural Change).

In an attempt to reduce the non-professional workload of the teaching staff, thereby freeing teachers to participate in SEARCH activities and providing them with more time to devote to professional tasks, one of the Project schools implemented a teachers' aide project. The purpose of this paper is to present findings emerging from an evaluation of the aide project. The evaluation was conducted during the period January to May, 1970[1].

II. PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The school was responsible for the educational program of approximately 300 students in grades four to twelve. During the period February 7, 1970, to July 17, 1970, two female aides were employed -- one full-time and one half-time. The aides were directly responsible to the school administration, but their services were made available to all teachers on a non-priority, first-come-first-served basis.

The total direct cost of the project; ie. salaries, advertising, equipment rental, was $2,627.77, of which HRRC contributed 62.5% and the County 37.5%.

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[1] The evaluation team consisted of Dr. L. W. West, Project Evaluator, University of Calgary; Mr. S. McRae, HRRC; Mr. D. Clarke, HRRC; Mr. W. Barrowcliffe, University of Calgary; and the author.

III. DATA COLLECTION

The evaluation program sought to obtain data related to three areas of concern: teacher functions, teacher aide functions, and reactions of teachers, aides, students, parents, and central office personnel towards teacher aides.

A. Teacher Functions

For two days during the week of January 22, 1970, eight teachers agreed to having their daily activities recorded by an outside observer. To this end, eight fourth-year Faculty of Education students were employed to make a minute-by-minute record of teacher activities from the time the teacher first entered the school until he left for home.

This procedure was repeated for two days during the week of May 25, 1970.

B. Teacher Aide Functions

Throughout the life of the project, each aide maintained a log-book of her daily activities. The aide was requested to provide the following information:

1. Name of the teacher requesting a service,
2. Nature of the service requested, and
3. Amount of time required to complete the requested service.

C. Attitudes

During the period June 2 - June 11, a research assistant was employed to conduct interviews with a number of teachers, parents, and students, as well as the aides.

During the course of the interview, these individuals were asked their views of:

1. The adequacy of the aides task performance,
2. Acceptance of aides by teachers, students, and parents,
3. The personal attributes and qualifications necessary for aides,
4. The influence of aides on students and teachers.

IV. MAJOR FINDINGS

A. Analysis of Teaching Practice

The direct observation of the activities of eight teachers over a period of four days resulted in the development of a taxonomy of teacher functions. The taxonomy subsumed a multitude of activities, thusly:

1. Social relations - social interaction with staff, students, and visitors.
2. Supervision and discipline - supervising lunchrooms, playgrounds, and busses; administering school policy; behavior management, etc.
3. Housekeeping - keeping room in order; arranging equipment; cleaning blackboards; etc.
4. Personnel logistics - moving between classrooms, staff rooms, and administrative offices.
5. Hard and software logistics - ordering, obtaining, and distributing equipment, supplies, and materials.
6. In-house communication and consultation - conferring with colleagues, administration, specialists, paraprofessionals; making and listening to announcements, memos, and reports.
7. Public relations - reception of visitors; conferring with parents; making and taking telephone calls; etc.

8. Clerical - recording attendance; accounting and bookkeeping; typing; duplicating; scoring objective tests; etc.
9. Administrative - scheduling events; arranging for field trips; requisitioning of supplies; etc.
10. Preparation of instructional materials - preparing A-V materials, bulletin boards, and displays; recording radio and TV programs for later presentation.
11. Instructional planning and preparation - reading; library research; planning learning experiences, designing instructional procedures; preparing lesson plans.
12. Classroom instruction - lecturing to class, leading class discussion; giving and explaining assignments, tutoring individual students; etc.
13. Evaluation - planning, preparing, and administering tests; preparing anecdotal, progress, and behavioral records; etc.
14. Counselling - acting as student ombudsman; facilitating self-exploration, exploration of opportunities, and decision-making.

With the development of the taxonomy, it was possible to create a profile of a teacher's day, both prior to and after the introduction of aides. Table I lists the major teacher functions and the average time allocated to each function during the course of a teacher's day.

While it would be premature to posit firm conclusions, several trends appear to be evident:

1. The amount of time teachers spend in school <u>decreased</u> after the aides were introduced.
2. The percentage of time allocated to functions VII and XII (public

TABLE I

AN ANALYSIS OF TEACHING PRACTICE
BEFORE TEACHERS' AIDES (T_1), and
FOUR MONTHS AFTER THEIR INTRODUCTION (T_2)

Function	Time Devoted to Function (min./teacher/day)		Percentage of Time Devoted to Function	
	T_1	T_2	T_1	T_2
I. Social Relations	68.7	63.3	14.5	14.6
II. Supervision and Discipline	11.5	11.9	2.4	2.7
III. Housekeeping	11.7	10.6	2.5	2.4
IV. Personnel Logistics (Movement)	17.2	9.6	3.6	2.2
V. Hard and Software Logistics	6.0	5.8	1.3	1.3
VI. In-House Communication and Consultation	44.1	43.3	9.3	10.0
VII. Public Relations	26.6	29.0	5.6	6.7
VIII. Clerical	43.1	32.8	9.1	7.6
IX. Administrative	1.8	4.5	0.4	1.0
X. Preparation of Instructional Materials	1.4	4.3	0.3	1.0
XI. Instructional Planning and Preparation	24.9	15.7	5.2	3.6
XII. Classroom Instruction	183.9	175.9	38.7	40.6
XIII. Evaluation	29.0	19.6	6.1	4.5
XIV. Counselling	0.6	2.6	0.1	0.6
XV. Non-classifiable	4.6	5.0	1.0	1.2
TOTALS	475 min.	434 min.	100%	100%

relations and classroom instruction) increased after the aides were introduced.

3. The percentage of time allocated to functions IV, VIII, XI, and XIII decreased after the aides were introduced.
4. The percentage of time allocated to the functions most commonly identified in the literature as professional functions (XI, XII, XIII, and XIV) decreased after the aides were introduced.
5. Teacher aides appeared to have little impact on the percentage of teacher time allocated to supervision and discipline, hard and software logistics, administrative, preparation of instructional materials, and counselling.

Table II provides an analysis of the time allocated to each function by each observed teacher, both prior to and after the introduction of aides. It should be noted that the time in Table II is the total time for two days.

Based on the data, several differences appear to exist between teachers in the amount of time they allocate to each function:

1. All teachers, with the exception of teacher three, spent less time in the school after the aides were introduced, with the largest decreases being noted for Teachers One, Four, Five, and Seven.
2. Teachers Three and Four allocated less time to social relations after the aides were introduced, than did their colleagues.
3. A trend towards allocating less time to supervision and discipline after the aides were introduced was evident for Teachers Three, Four, Five, and Six.

TABLE II

TASK ANALYSIS OF TEACHER ACTIVITY

DISTRIBUTION OF TIME AMONG VARIOUS FUNCTIONS IN TOTAL MINUTES

AND AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL TIME FOR TWO DAYS

T_1 - Jan. 20 and Jan. 22, 1970 (Before Aides)
T_2 - May 26 and May 28, 1970 (After Aides)

Teacher - / Function	One				Two				Three				Four			
	T_1		T_2		T_1		T_2		T_1		T_2		T_1		T_2	
	Min.	%	Min.	%	Min.	%	Min.	%	Min.	%	Min.	%	Min.	%	Min.	%
I. Social relations	103	9.6	117	13.5	205	23.8	257	31.7	168	19.5	91	10.3	248	25.1	157	17.7
II. Supervision and discipline	21	2.0	63	7.3	11	1.3	18	2.2	11	1.3	5	0.6	37	3.7	15	1.7
III. Housekeeping	66	6.1	45	5.2	5	0.6	3	0.4	16	1.9	6	0.7	7	0.7	8	0.9
IV. Personnel Logistics (movement)	77	7.2	6	0.7	21	2.4	26	3.2	36	4.2	45	5.1	7	0.7	4	0.4
V. Hard and software logistics	--	--	5	0.6	15	1.7	5	0.6	1	0.1	18	2.0	3	0.3	3	0.3
VI. In-house communication and consultation	264	24.5	201	23.2	71	8.2	58	7.2	73	8.5	94	10.7	61	6.2	93	10.5
VII. Public relations	284	26.4	238	27.4	9	1.0	143	17.6	8	0.9	42	4.8	--	--	--	--
VIII. Clerical	19	1.8	7	0.8	55	6.4	15	1.8	80	9.3	5	0.6	51	5.2	45	5.1
IX. Administrative	--	--	38	4.4	--	--	2	0.2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
X. Preparation of instructional materials	--	--	2	0.2	--	--	--	--	--	--	16	1.8	12	1.2	30	3.4
XI. Instructional planning and preparation	60	5.6	--	--	60	7.0	58	7.2	11	1.3	3	0.3	64	6.5	77	8.7
XII. Classroom instruction	171	15.9	146	16.8	343	39.8	173	21.3	437	50.6	445	50.6	419	42.3	410	46.1
XIII. Evaluation	9	0.8	--	--	60	7.0	--	--	15	1.7	100	11.4	49	4.9	30	3.4
XIV. Counseling	--	--	--	--	--	--	42	5.2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
XV. Non-classifiable	2	0.2	--	--	7	0.8	11	1.4	7	-.8	10	1.1	32	3.2	17	1.9
TOTAL	1076	100	868	100	862	100	811	100	863	100	880	100	990	100	889	100

TABLE II (continued)

Teacher - Function	Five				Six				Seven				Eight			
	T_1		T_2		T_1		T_2		T_1		T_2		T_1		T_2	
	Min.	%	Min.	%	Min.	%	Min.	%	Min.	%	Min.	%	Min.	%	Min.	%
I. Social relations	113	10.8	77	8.3	91	10.5	85	10.2	108	10.6	125	14.4	63	7.2	103	11.9
II. Supervision and discipline	51	4.9	16	1.7	40	4.6	1	0.1	12	1.2	65	7.5	1	0.1	7	0.8
III. Housekeeping	20	1.9	34	3.7	39	4.5	26	3.1	7	0.7	11	1.3	27	3.1	37	4.3
IV. Personnel Logistics (movement)	28	2.7	12	1.3	20	2.3	39	4.7	75	7.4	16	1.8	11	1.3	6	0.7
V. Hard and software logistics	29	2.8	15	1.6	45	5.2	38	4.5	3	0.3	8	0.9	--	--	--	--
VI. In-house communication and consultation	162	15.4	99	10.7	6	0.7	19	2.3	40	3.9	107	12.4	28	3.2	21	2.4
VII. Public relations	108	10.3	23	2.5	--	--	--	--	17	1.7	2	0.2	--	--	16	1.9
VIII. Clerical	121	11.5	64	6.9	118	13.6	70	8.4	112	11.0	98	11.3	134	15.3	220	25.5
IX. Administrative	16	1.5	9	1.0	--	--	3	0.4	13	1.3	18	2.1	--	--	2	0.2
X. Preparation of instructional materials	--	--	20	2.2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	10	1.1	--	--
XI. Instructional planning and preparation	56	5.3	7	0.8	31	3.6	40	4.8	60	5.9	49	5.7	56	6.4	17	2.0
XII. Classroom instruction	308	29.4	502	54.3	471	54.1	497	59.4	414	40.8	293	33.8	379	43.4	348	40.4
XIII. Evaluation	27	2.6	38	4.1	7	0.8	--	--	143	14.1	70	8.1	153	17.5	75	8.7
XIV. Counseling	10	1.0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
XV. Non-classifiable	--	--	9	1.0	2	0.2	19	2.3	11	1.1	4	0.5	12	1.4	10	1.2
TOTAL	1049	100	925	100	870	100	837	100	1015	100	866	100	874	100	862	100

4. A trend towards allocating less time to clerical functions after the aides were introduced was evident for all teachers, with the exception of Teacher Eight.
5. Teachers Four and Six allocated more of their time to instructional planning and preparation after the aides were introduced, whereas their colleagues allocated less of their time to this function.
6. A trend towards allocating more time for classroom instruction after the aides were introduced was evident only for Teachers Three, Five, and Six.
7. Teachers Three and Five were the only teachers to allocate more of their time to evaluation after the aides were introduced.
8. Teacher Two was the only teacher to allocate more of his time to counselling after the aides were introduced.

B. Teacher Aide Functions

Throughout the life of the teacher aide project, the aides maintained a log of their activities. An examination of the logbooks resulted in the development of a taxonomy of teacher aide functions. Table III lists the nine major headings of the taxonomy and the allocation of the two aides working time to each function.

The data indicates that throughout the life of the project the functions of typing and duplicating, classroom supervision, and lunch hour supervision consumed the overwhelming proportion of the aides' time. Inasmuch as these functions constituted the major terms of reference for the employment of aides, the findings were not unexpected.

In Table IV, the percentage of working time that the aides allocated to each function for each of the observed teachers is listed. The

TABLE III

TASK ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' AIDE ACTIVITY

Distribution of Total Working Time in Minutes
and in Percentages

Activity	Month				Total
	Feb.	March	April	May	
1. Typing and duplicating	3,340 (38.1%)	3,316 (28.0%)	4,355 (34.5%)	5,023 (40.4%)	16,034 (35.1%)
2. Classroom supervision	2,360 (26.9%)	4,000 (33.8%)	4,160 (33.0%)	3,810 (30.6%)	14,330 (31.4%)
3. Lunch hour supervision	1,440 (16.4%)	2,160 (18.2%)	2,100 (16.7%)	2,290 (18.4%)	7,990 (17.4%)
4. Library assistance	129 (1.5%)	700 (5.9%)	845 (6.7%)	180 (1.4%)	1,854 (4.1%)
5. Cleanup	375 (4.3%)	280 (2.4%)	565 (4.5%)	490 (3.9%)	1,710 (3.7%)
6. Preparation of AV & dem. mat.	235 (2.7%)	771 (6.5%)	120 (1.0%)	120 (1.0%)	1,246 (2.7%)
7. Miscellaneous clerical	270 (3.1%)	170 (1.4%)	135 (1.1%)	475 (3.8%)	1,050 (2.3%)
8. Research	465 (5.3%)	120 (1.0%)	270 (2.1%)	-	855 (1.9%)
9. Marking	155 (1.8%)	320 (2.7%)	60 (0.5%)	60 (0.5%)	595 (1.3%)
TOTAL	8,769 (100%)	11,837 (100%)	12,610 (100%)	12,448 (100%)	45,664 (100%)

Note 1: During classroom supervision, teachers' aides also performed many other functions such as marking, collating, and preparing of instructional materials.

Note 2: Lunch hour supervision includes coaching of recreational games.

row at the base of the Table is a tabulation of the total amount of time that each of these teachers called upon the services of the aides. It should be that Teacher One, who was the principal, did not personally use the aides but assigned much of their classroom and lunch hour supervision functions on behalf of the other teachers.

As is readily apparent, there were great differences between teachers in terms of the amount of time that they utilized the services of the aides and the functions which they asked the aides to perform for them. For example, Teacher Two, who asked the aides to perform eight functions, utilized the aides more than four times as much as Teacher Eight, who asked the aides to perform only two functions.

A comparison of Table II and Table IV leads to some further observations:

1. Teacher Two, who utilized the services of the aide most, spent the least amount of time in the school, while Teacher Eight spent approximately the same amount of time in the school, both before and after the introduction of the aides.
2. Teacher Two, who utilized the aides most often, and Teachers Seven and Eight, who utilized the aides least often, of the observed teachers, showed a decrease of 20.1%, 13.2%, and 16.2%, respectively, in the percentage of time they allocated to instructional planning and preparation, classroom instruction, evaluation, and counselling after the aides were introduced. The other teachers increased the percentage of time they allocated to these functions after the aides were introduced.
3. Teacher Eight, who utilized the aides services least, was the

TABLE IV

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS' AIDE TIME SPENT IN VARIOUS FUNCTIONS FOR THE OBSERVED STAFF MEMBERS

As a Percentage of Total Time Spent for That Staff Member

Work Category	Teacher							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Typing and duplicating	0.2	40.0	61.2	50.8	52.0	48.7	88.2	40.6
Classroom supervision	51.2	28.6	14.1	10.5	1.9	50.0	9.2	59.4
Lunch hour supervision	48.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Library assistance	-	0.1	-	0.2	-	-	-	-
Cleanup	0.4	3.7	-	18.0	42.8	-	-	-
Preparation of AV & dem. mat.	-	9.5	4.1	10.9	0.7	-	1.1	-
Miscellaneous clerical	0.1	4.1	-	7.7	2.6	1.3	1.5	-
Research	-	11.7	9.7	-	-	-	-	-
Marking	-	2.3	10.9	1.9	-	-	-	-
TOTAL TIME (minutes)	16,610	4,483	3,405	3,233	2,105	1,560	1,309	875

only teacher to record a substantial increase in the percentage of time he allocated to clerical functions after aides were introduced.

C. Attitudes

During the first half of June, 1970, a number of individuals were interviewed in an attempt to obtain their views of the teachers' aide project.

1. A summary of the views of teachers (N = 15).

a) The majority of teachers (11) felt that the aides performed clerical and typing and duplicating functions adequately.

b) While four teachers felt that the aides performed adequately during study hall supervision, eleven felt that the aides rendered inadequate service.

c) While eight teachers asserted that they enjoyed a good relationship with the aides, two stated that they had refused to call upon the services of the aides.

d) Nine teachers expressed the view that the aides enabled the teachers to devote more time to preparation and to give more attention to individual students. Four teachers claimed that there was an improvement in the quality of instruction and in staff communication. One teacher felt that the students did not respect the authority of the aides during supervised study periods; one saw little change in the teachers' role; and one questioned the effect of the project on instructional improvement.

e) The teachers ascribed four essential attributes to an aide --

pleasant personality; ability to relate and communicate with others; willingness to learn and to cooperate; and clerical skills.

f) While the teachers generally felt that aides should be employed they identified four operational needs:

(1) more training and supervision of aides,

(2) a clarification of professional and non-professional roles,

(3) experimentation and/or guidance in the effective utilization of aides, and

(4) ways and means of assigning work to aides so that there would be an equitable distribution of service among teachers.

2. Summary of the views of students (N = 8 groups)

a) Seven groups noted that the aides carried out lunch hour supervision, classroom supervision, and typing functions, while four groups identified the cleanup function.

b) Four groups felt that the aides were less strict and more friendly than the teachers, while two groups felt that student work was returned quicker and that teachers were now able to give more attention to individual students. While three groups commented that less work was now being done in study periods, two groups felt that there was now less waste of class time.

c) Three groups felt that teachers were now better prepared and that the quality of typed handout material had improved.

d) The students considered personality and the ability to understand young people as the major requirement of an aide.

3. Summary of the views of aides (N = 2)

   a) Both aides indicated that their primary role was one of performing non-professional tasks so that teachers might have more time to devote to professional tasks. Clerical and supervisory tasks were perceived as being the major types of non-professional tasks.

   b) Both aides expressed a desire for more guidance from teachers, particularly in supervisory tasks.

   c) Both aides expressed a desire to continue as aides. One aide commented that she would offer her services voluntarily, for it helps her to better understand her children.

4. Summary of the views of community members (N = 13)

   a) The community members saw the aides as:

      (1) providing teachers with more time for professional duties(5)

      (2) providing teachers with more time to work with individual students (2)

      (3) allowing teachers to do the job they are paid to do (2)

      (4) helping to satisfy teacher needs (2)

      (5) reducing the number of teachers (2)

   b) While many community members were supportive of the aide program, they indicated that they were not being kept fully informed of the program.

V. SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper has been to present findings emerging from an evaluation of a teachers' aide project implemented in a small rural school during the second semester of the 1969-1970 school term. Due to such constraints as a short project life span, a small number of observed teachers,

and a possible lack of consistency in the recordings made by the observers, conclusions were not put forward, rather trends were noted.

Teachers appeared to have spent less time in school after aides were introduced, teachers varied in either or both their ability and willingness to make use of the aides' services, teachers appeared to allocate less time to clerical tasks after the aides were introduced. Students perceived that teachers were better prepared after the aides were introduced and felt that the aides were more understanding of students than were teachers. The members of the community were generally supportive of the program, but expressed a need for more school-to-home communication.

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that the primary purpose of the evaluation program, as well as this report, was to provide a basis for further discussion and consideration of the role of teachers' aides. It was not intended to show correct or incorrect ways and means of utilizing aides, nor was it designed to judge the extent of attainment of the project's objectives. As SEARCH is primarily a development activity, the data is best viewed as being an input, or feedback, which will assist the teachers concerned in any modification of the aide project, that they may deem desirable.